

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES NEWS RELEASE



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2012 Kuskokwim River Salmon Fishery News Release 7 Kuskokwim River Subsistence Salmon Fishing Restrictions Emergency Order 6

This is an announcement from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game at Bethel for subsistence salmon fishermen in the Kuskokwim River Drainage.

Effective 12:00 a.m., Wednesday, June 20, 2012 until 11:59 p.m., Sunday, June 24, 2012 subsistence Chinook salmon fishing with hook and line gear is closed and subsistence fishing is restricted to the use of gillnets with 4-inch or less mesh not exceeding 60-feet in length in the Upper Section of Subdistrict 1-B to Tuluksak (Rolling Closure Section 2). This extends the Rolling Closure in Section 2 as announced in News Release 4 for five additional days.

This area is defined as that portion of the Kuskokwim River and its tributaries upstream from a line between ADF&G regulatory markers located between the Kialik and Johnson Rivers to a line between ADF&G regulatory markers located approximately half a mile upstream of the Tuluksak River mouth. This section includes the slough (locally known as Utak Slough) on the northwest side of the Kuskokwim River adjacent to the Tuluksak River mouth.

The current Bethel Test Fishery (BTF) Catch Per Unit Effort (CPUE) indicates that there are not enough Chinook salmon to meet the 2012 Chinook salmon Management Objective (Management Objective) that was agreed upon by the Department, the Federal Inseason Manager, and was supported by the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group (Working Group). During the Friday, June 15, Working Group meeting the Department and the Federal Inseason Manager presented a recommendation to extend the 7-day rolling closure along the Kuskokwim

River for 5 additional days in an effort to conserve Chinook salmon. The Working Group voted to not support the recommendation.

If the BTF CPUE indicates that the Management Objective is likely to be met, subsistence restrictions may be reduced. However, if the BTF CPUE continues to indicate that the Management Objective will not be met; further management actions will be warranted.

The assessment of chum and sockeye salmon at the BTF indicates that abundance of these species are low at this point, but their abundance is starting to increase and is expected to increase over the next two weeks based on historic run timing. The Department and Federal Inseason Manager intend to allow opportunity to harvest these species when their abundance is adequate to reduce impacts on Chinook salmon abundance.

The subsistence salmon fishing closures in the Kuskokwim River Drainage in the Lower Section of Subdistrict 1-B (Rolling Closure Section 1) as announced in News Release 6 and in the Kuskokwim River Drainage from Tuluksak to Chuathbaluk (Rolling Closure Section 3) as announced in News Release 5 remain in effect.

The Department plans to issue a News Release on Wednesday, June 20, regarding upcoming subsistence salmon fishing opportunity in the Kuskokwim River.

Further announcements will be made from the Bethel Fish and Game office and through local radio stations. News releases will be faxed to area villages and local fish processing companies.

For additional information concerning this news release:

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